

115 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT 05633
TEL: (802) 828-2228
FAX: (802) 828-2424



STATE OF VERMONT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

REP. DAVID SHARPE, CHAIR
REP. ALBERT PEARCE, VICE CHAIR
REP. KATHRYN WEBB, RANKING MEMBER
REP. PETER CONLON, CLERK
REP. SCOTT BECK
REP. LAWRENCE CUPOLI
REP. DYLAN GIAMBATISTA
REP. BEN W. JOSEPH
REP. EMILY LONG
REP. CHRISTOPHER MATTOS
REP. ALICE MILLER

MEMORANDUM

To: Representative Catherine Toll, Chair, House Committee on Appropriations

From: Representative David Sharpe, Chair, House Committee on Education

Date: January 11, 2018

Subject: Provisions in the Governor's Recommended FY2018 Budget Adjustment

We are responding to your letter of January 4, 2018 concerning the Governor's recommended FY 2018 budget adjustment. We support, and view as noncontroversial, the appropriation from the Education Fund to Flexible Pathways to cover program costs, the reversions to the Education Fund for educational programs, and the "Supplemental Property Tax Relief Fund" transfer to fund the Statewide School District Data Management System, as set forth in your letter.

You asked whether our top priority this year is the General Fund transfer of \$300,000.00 to the Agency of Education for the weighting study mandated in 2017 Acts and Resolves No. 49. While we believe that this study is important and would help us assess the effectiveness and fairness of our equalized pupil weighting system, it is not our top priority.

Our top priority is to provide additional funding to the Agency of Education to facilitate the addition of two staff positions, and we request that you approve the appropriation of up to \$300,000.00 from the General Fund to the Agency of Education for this purpose. We believe that the Agency is and has been understaffed for years, and faces particular staffing challenges this year in the areas of prekindergarten education, special education, and Act 46 implementation. The Agency's work in developing the Act 46 State-wide merger plan, which is required to be issued by the State Board of Education this year, makes additional staffing for the Agency a matter of urgency that we believe should be addressed in the budget adjustment bill.